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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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EXCISE

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAIGON 3106

AUGUST 10.

1. [redacted] LAM DONG PROVINCE, MADE INTERESTING COMMENT TO EMBASSY OFFICER RE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. (LAM DONG IS ONLY CONSTITUENCY IN VIET NAM WHERE ONLY ONE CANDIDATE APPLIED.) [redacted] SAID THAT PRIOR TO AUGUST 1-3 ELECTION SEMINAR IN SAIGON (EMBTEL 2631) CONDUCTED BY GENERALS KY AND THANG, HE WAS VERY SKEPTICAL ABOUT ELECTIONS PARTICULARLY ABOUT SINCERITY OF GVN TO HOLD HONEST ELECTIONS AND PERMIT ASSEMBLY TO WORK FREELY. HOWEVER, AS RESULT OF SEMINAR AND PARTICULARLY REPEATED STATEMENTS BY KY AND THANG, HE CLEARLY CONVINCED THAT GVN SINCERE IN HOLDING ELECTIONS AND HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING TO SUPPORT THEM.

RSR

2. COMMENT: SIGNIFICANCE OF [redacted] REMARKS LIES IN POSSIBLE SKEPTICISM OF ELECTIONS HELD BY OTHER GVN OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY AT PROVINCE LEVEL. INFORMATION CADRES IN LAM DONG PROVINCE REPORTEDLY ALREADY VERY ACTIVE IN PUBLICIZING ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL HAMLETS. THUS, MAY BE VALID TO CONCLUDE THAT OTHER SKEPTICS ALSO NOW CONVINCED ABOUT GVN'S SINCERITY IN HOLDING HONEST AND CONSTRUCTIVE ELECTIONS AND ELECTION ACTIVITY CONSEQUENTLY WILL PICK UP NOTICEABLY DURING NEXT TWO WEEKS.

3. [redacted] REPORTEDLY BEEN TAKEN TO TASK BY II CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL VINH LOC FOR PRODUCING ONLY ONE CANDIDATE. [redacted] APPEARED EMBARRASSED ABOUT LACK OF OTHER CANDIDATES AND IT PROBABLE [redacted] DID NOT ENCOURAGE OTHER CANDIDATES BECAUSE ORIGINAL SKEPTICISM. AS MATTER OF INTEREST.

LODGE

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